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## EUROPEAN WOMEN.

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### I.—A “PARISIENNE.”

BY THE MARQUISE DE SAN CARLOS.

THE genuine Frenchwoman of society is rarely beautiful. She is always more or less fascinating. Like the French nobleman she is tall, lithe, intelligent, appreciative of art, with much delicacy of feeling, and has either very strong, almost bigoted, principles or none at all.

As there is no possibility for the development of love before marriage, this most natural of all human passions is apt to assert its power long after the excitable young Frenchwoman has contracted an alliance with some “unsympathetic fellow,” and it needs much character and very solid virtue to resist the courtship of enterprising French noblemen who swarm round young brides with the scepticism of true libertines.

Women of strict principles, who have not become nuns on leaving school, and who have had the courage to withstand the current of youth and passion, lead, after marriage, for the most part, lives of silent domestic martyrdom. Those who have rather loose morals, and they are perchance the greater number, seem to have a pretty good time of it, and spend their golden years “*trompant leurs maris*” with a vengeance, while they bring up their children with the greatest severity, on a system of blindfold ignorance. In fact, the cool way French women have of being immoral without giving up going to church on Sunday is a mystery. One sister will be a Carmelite, and the other will accept the homage of half a dozen admirers. Yet both have been educated in the same convent; both have shared the same life till the age of eighteen, when the gay laughing blonde entered

a religious order, and the dark almond-eyed sister sought the marriage tie for the sole purpose of securing freedom.

The French are naturally artistic in their tastes ; this characteristic reaches the very quintessence of delicacy in the person of a dainty lady of fashion. She gives evidence of her fastidiousness from the tip of her tiny slipper to the soft curly ringlets that encircle her brow or have been trained to curl round her graceful neck. The display of underclothes made in the windows of renowned "*lingeries*" give but a faint idea of the fairy-like fancies with which lace frills and ruffled flounces, tasty ribbons and transparent *foulards* have been taught to hide spare forms and bony limbs and suggest the line of beauty in the reflection of a Psyche.

In the arrangement of her toilette the art of a French belle is so great that one is easily led to believe her beautiful until an English or American "professional" enters the room ! Then only does one understand where the difference lies. The Anglo-Saxon reminds you of some antique statue ; her pencilled eyebrows, her fresh, sweet mouth, the perfect oval of her face and her dazzling complexion are unrivalled ; while the pretty Marquise's nose suddenly appears too long, her coloring despairingly sallow, her lips too thin, and her mouth too large.

But keep your two beauties together for a little while ; the Englishwoman will be sure to have much amusing and interesting information on hand ; whereas it will be quite impossible ten minutes after to recall a word of all the gay nonsense your French friend spouted away almost unwittingly, and when the next waltz strikes up you are half surprised to find that you have left your charming compatriot to the care of some adventurous Frenchman and that the bright bewitching eyes of the Marquise are looking up to you from beneath your very own.

Besides, Anglo-Saxon women rarely possess "*l'art de porter la toilette.*" One reads "Worth" or "Doucet" all over their finery ; not so the true Parisienne. She is never a *mannequin*, but leaves this part to the saleswoman. Put the same gown on the Vicomtesse de X. and Lady Z. and you will hear people exclaim as the former passes : "How well the Vicomtesse looks to-day !" and when Lady Z. follows it will be : "What a fortune she spends on Worth." There is something, or rather a nothing—" *un rien* "—as the French say—in the way of giving last touches, of placing a

flower or a jewel on this side or that, which the Parisienne has found in her own looking-glass, and which suits her own peculiar style, her own face and nose and smile, and which she would have placed quite differently had she Lady Z.'s nose and face and smile. In the meantime pretty unartistic Lady Z. has left the bow just where the seamstress pinned it on, and has allowed her *coiffeur* to dress her hair as best he chooses.

Dress moulds itself to the figure of an *élégante*, who remains hours before her mirror, like a painter before his easel, intent on beautifying the image therein reflected. This artistic *chef d'œuvre* once terminated madame seems to forget entirely the pretty picture she has made, and from that moment dedicates all her faculties to the use of those other weapons which intelligent coquetry places at her disposal. Tact, wit and the ever smouldering fire of her glances are all called to action, and soon envelop her in a magnetic atmosphere which easily hypnotizes those who approach too closely and fall an easy prey to the charms of this fascinating siren.

The life of a Parisienne is a round of continual amusement. This, however, may be said of every woman of society in all parts of the world. That society is more absorbing and less fatiguing, more intoxicating though less exciting, in Paris than elsewhere is equally true. The masculine element and the undercurrent of rivalry with the *demi-monde* add much of forbidden-fruit-like charm to the enjoyments of society. Men have nothing to do ; women naught but their toilettes to think of ; there is plenty of time left for pleasures the most subtle.

Housekeeping lies lightly on the shoulders of a Parisienne. If one has an apartment it is easily superintended ; for an important establishment there exist legions of well-trained servants with whom the whole thing is a question of money, not of possibilities, as happens in many other countries. To give a reception, whatever may be its character, is therefore an easy matter. A few well-combined orders, and every detail is executed with artistic and intelligent care. Any Parisienne may give a ball or go to one without having housekeeping worries to weigh down her light, graceful spirits. Let us then seek her in her own bright kingdom, the ball-room !

As I write these words I recall the splendid halls of the Duchess de la R., at which the "*Faubourg St. Germain*" reigned

supreme. How aristocratic they all looked, those high bred men and women. How frail and delicate ; how slender and graceful. How simple their attire notwithstanding the richness of the textures employed, the elegance of its make and the wealth of jewels placed here and there as though by accident. I used to go early and watch them as they arrived, dropping their curtseys to the mistress of the house near the entrance, while their high-sounding names were being loudly and pompously announced by the most imposing of *huissiers*.

As this stream of fashionable people passed by, it would be : “ There goes the Countess X., old M.’s last flame—;” or “ here is pretty Madame de N., who caused Count L.’s death in a duel with the Duke de B.—;” or “ that is the Baronne de J., her husband and her husband’s best friend !” and so on till the arrivals came few and far between and we would follow the Duchess back into the dancing room.

Strange, mysterious creatures are these Parisiennes, who spend their nights in soft, voluptuous motion, under the light of waxen tapers, gliding over the slippery wooden parquets of French salons to the sound of rapturous music. Graceful sirens, with swanlike necks and drooping shoulders, thin, pale arms and small, aristocratic heads, are these mothers and wives whose babes cry alone in the stillness of darkened nurseries, while their husbands make love to beautiful women as vulgar, spontaneous and dangerous as they are refined, old-fashioned and fascinating.

In these splendid halls, these gorgeous festivals, we find no real freshness, none of that virginal charm and originality that enliven society in other parts. The women we see dreaming through one enervating waltz after another in the arms of Mephistopheles like men are not innocent maidens : they are the wives and mothers of the French nobility. For this reason one feels in their midst inexpressible sadness. That very knowledge of life which gives them so voluptuous an attraction explains the odium in which dancing is held by the French clergy, for has not this healthful recreation, at which the village curate used to preside on the greensward opposite his church, long since ceased to be in France the innocent pastime of youth.

The Marquise de X., an English lady, married to a Frenchman, and with whom I frequently shared my observations in

society, used to tell me that at home she often danced the cotillon with her husband, but had she dared indulge in such a freak at Paris she would have become the laughing stock of the city. She would have been smitten by the much dreaded blast of ridicule.

At one of these balls such as I have described I met for the first time a celebrated Marquise, still famous for her beauty. In the marvellous conservatory, forty feet square and as many high, with its huge palms and centennial ferns and its discreet globes of light, half hidden among the branches, was I introduced to this most perfect, most exquisite woman, who rose like a fairy lily in the midst of this artificial forest and looked every inch a queen in this world of aristocratic royalty.

I followed her on that glorious moonlight night down the long flight of steps that led to the grand old park which this antique mansion still retains in the heart of encroaching Paris. As we walked through the long avenues under over-reaching branches of oaks and lindens, we discoursed on art and study, and I could not help contrasting the elevation of this beautiful woman's mind with the emptiness of her life—the life of all her friends—an endless round of balls and receptions, races and theatre-parties, charity fairs and art expositions, morning rides and afternoon drives, five o'clock teas and grand dinner parties, to say nothing of escapades.

That the Marquise is beautiful I need not repeat. Her complexion is fair and her figure is that of a goddess, but it is in her eyes that lies the spell. They are by no means languishing eyes, neither are they petulant black eyes. They are of a deep blue violet, with long, dark lashes—eyes that beam on you with intelligence and overflow on all who approach her with feminine tenderness. Her short upper lip has that daintiness and haughtiness that generations of culture and refinement alone can produce. She is, in short, the most perfect type of the Parisienne I know, because she unites such beauty as is rarely found among the aristocracy to all that peculiar charm of manner, fascination and *esprit*, the secret of which the Parisienne alone possesses.

Since I was introduced to the Marquise I have been to Spain, to England, to America. I have watched by the bedside of dying children and moaned over the loss of those most dearly

beloved. Need I add that during all this time of suffering I had almost forgotten the existence of that gay world of pleasure called Society, when Fortune's mad wheel threw me again suddenly, not long ago, into the midst of a Parisian ball? I felt as though I had grown hundreds of years old, and looked round in bewilderment to see who had filled the ranks of my friends, when, lo! in a quadrille opposite I saw advancing pretty Mademoiselle R., holding out her skirts just as gracefully as she used to do ten long years ago! And in the angle of the room, behind her, was the Duchess of Y., with her parrot-like nose and crooked back, scanning all that was going on through her spiteful old glasses just as before. The grand Madame B., too, was there sitting in a conspicuous position, displaying diamonds and old flesh with the same complacency as ever. Almost next to me was Mademoiselle de C., now Madame de P., whose jealous husband mounted guard beside her in the same ridiculous fashion that had caused him to be laughed at as her suitor.

I went about questioning every body and found to my surprise that none of the people had travelled; none had had sick loved ones to nurse; no one had seemingly lost any near relatives. During all this time they had all been doing the same thing over again, day after day and night after night. They looked tired and restless, not bored—as though waiting for something, a “*bon mot*” or a bit of scandal, before dispersing. A few only of my old acquaintances were missing, and these had been replaced by their moral counterparts.

Yes, on the whole, I had awakened from a long sleep, a modern Rip Van Winkle, with this difference, that I had found no change. The Vicomtesse L. urged me to go to her Thursdays in the very words I was in the habit of recalling, and when I asked Madame de B. about her painting, she replied coquettishly, her usual answer: “Oh! I am nothing but an amateur, you know!”

But none of these intelligent folk seemed to take the least pains to amuse themselves, much less to amuse one another. Women glided about, waiting to be admired. Men stood off, like so many supercilious critics. There was a good deal of excellent music which no one listened to, yet they would have been incensed had it proved to be mediocre. Finally Coquelin was announced, and deluged the whole assembly with a shower of Parisian wit such as none other possesses, of diamond-cut brilliancy, after

which all went home contented. People of Society have no time to make fun for themselves ; it must be served up hot, that they may partake of this spicy stimulus, this mental constitutional, necessary to the life of a true Parisian.

As I drove away from this sort of posthumous apparition of myself in Society I could not help thinking how much more amusing and less troublesome it would have been for those who had passed their teens to spend the evening with a new book or an old friend.

LOLA DE SAN CARLOS.

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## II.—THE SPANISH WOMAN.

BY EVA CANEL.

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THE fact that the Spanish woman enjoys no social freedom until she marries or attains her majority has given rise to the supposition, among those who know us only through the fantastic tales of unscrupulous travellers, that in Spain women live subject to the most absolute of tyrannies, and that we are the victims of the brutal selfishness of man. Nothing could be further from the truth or more calumnious. The Spanish woman yielding cheerfully and willingly the obedience to paternal authority enjoined by religion receives, with the nuptial benediction, the liberty to go about alone and to guard unaided the good name and the respect with which in childhood and youth she had seen herself surrounded. But let it not therefore be imagined that the Spanish girl leads the life of a recluse, subjected to monastic rules. So far from this being the case perhaps there is no woman in the world who enjoys herself more while she is unmarried, who is a greater coquette, or who tyrannizes more completely over her suitors ; and when long dresses give her the right to present herself into society a period of amusements and diversions begins for her which terminates without regret on the part of the good wife, as soon as the duties of maternity come to fill her life and to completely occupy both her thoughts and her time.

In Spain we know nothing of women's congresses because the women who struggle and who study, and who enter the literary, artistic, scientific or journalistic arena, do so on the same foot-



ing as the men, the culture of both sexes being thus measured by the same standard. Our women professors, our literary women and all the women who devote themselves to a scientific career, pursue their studies with the men, discuss scientific questions with the men later on, and continue always to be their companions, without asking liberties which they do not need, because they feel honored by and are satisfied with the protection and respect which the opposite sex yields them.

In the home the Spanish woman is the mistress and arbiter of all that concerns the management of the house, the education of the children and the order which should reign in every respectable family. There is a Spanish proverb which says: "The wife's realm is the house and the husband's the street," teaching us that our kingdom is where the vestals fed the sacred fire, but, without violence or effort, we extend the aphorism and add that while the husband does his part in the street we should do our part in the house, if only imposing respect by our presence and giving a good example to our daughters, destined to become good wives and mothers in their turn.

The Spanish knights of old entered the lists bearing the device, "For God and for my lady"—a reminiscence of chivalry which some nobles still preserve, placing before their titles when signing their names the initial letter of their wife's name. Could higher consideration or greater chivalry be asked? We do not desire divorce because we do not understand how a woman can be the wife of one man and meet another name she had formerly borne, without the blush of shame mounting to her cheek, and the tears to her eyes. To the Spanish woman the father of her children is sacred, and the man who has attained this high position never declines either in the consideration or respect of the good wife and discreet woman.

Our laws could not be wiser nor more favorable to us than they are. Before the law in Spain at the present day woman occupies the favored position to which her personal qualities and the high grade of progress which judicial science has reached in our country give her undisputed right. In criminal matters woman is shown marked preference over man, both in the imposing of certain punishments and in the manner of carrying them out; and she has an equal right with man to exercise such functions as she may find advantageous in addition to others which

are exclusively her privilege and which have solid and reasonable guarantees in law. In civil matters woman may, according to her capacity, make contracts, and act as a witness, executrix and guardian ; more, she can perform the functions of the head of the family without any limitations whatsoever, failing the father. She may also, in accordance with the commercial code, engage in commerce with the expressed or tacit consent of her husband, or of whomsoever else she might require the concession ; and if she is subject to no one's authority nothing more is requisite than that she should have reached the age of twenty-one to be free to engage in commerce. What more can we Spanish women ask of our laws than to make us the absolute head of the family in case of the death or incapacity of our husbands.

In Spain there are banking houses that do business under the name of a woman, as there are women doctors, serving in the hospitals of the State, and women writers, and women journalists, and women doctors in the sciences, and women bachelors in arts, in philosophy, and in letters ; and, above all, we have notable women pedagogues who have raised very high the standard of instruction in Spanish schools.

In this category I include the Spanish possessions where feminine culture has little to learn from countries that pride themselves on their culture.

To appreciate the intellectual advancement of the women of a country something more is required than can be conveyed by a quarter of an hour's discourse, dictated by the caprice or the prejudices of the speaker. Let anyone who wishes to know the intellectual condition of the Spanish woman ponder the works presented by her in the World's Columbian Exposition ; let him note their character, let him study their contents, let him make himself familiar with their ideas ; and thus he will be able to see how many inaccurate statements are made and spread. Let him look at the hand work, let him read the scientific works of Concepcion Arenal (a great woman who is to have a statue erected to her by popular subscription), and the critical works of Emilio Pardo Bazan, the illustrious journalist, both writers of world-wide reputation and whose glory alone is sufficient to irradiate with its splendor all the women of their country.

If this be not sufficient there are the women composers of music, the women painters, and the women sculptors of Spain—

a brilliant constellation that occupied a conspicuous place in the exposition. And be it remembered that there was in Chicago no true exhibition of our women's work, and that it may be estimated without fear of mistake that fully ninety per cent. of what they might have presented was wanting.

In Spain women are not machines, nor do machines perform those labors which feminine intelligence can adorn; consequently everything that is the handiwork of woman bears the inimitable stamp which the *quid divinum* gives and which cannot be given by the most perfect machine.

Our women of the lower classes in the northern provinces make up for their lower grade of culture by the profound sagacity with which they are endowed, and govern and direct, unaided, the labors of the field, as well as their families, when the husband emigrates seeking to remedy his poverty or to increase his little fortune. The dowry of the Spanish woman is sacred—her husband cannot touch it without her express consent.

What does it matter then that Spanish girls are not allowed the liberty of travelling and going out unaccompanied when this is not only not to their injury but, on the contrary, greatly to their advantage? And there is one cause of this custom which alone would be sufficient to justify it—mother-love. The Spanish mother never separates from her daughters, and on the day on which she gives them up to the husbands who acquire through love indisputable rights, the mother weeps as if she were about to lose forever this piece of her heart. And be it remembered that woman in our country has the liberty to choose a husband and to marry the man whom her heart has chosen even without her parents' consent—to such an extent do the Spanish laws favor women.

The civil marriage law, when this was in force, ordained that the woman contracting marriage should be asked if she was marrying through compulsion or of her own free will, and the epistle of St. Paul, which the priest reads to the bride and groom before pronouncing the benediction, says expressly, clearly and wisely, "a companion I give you, and not a slave."

It is true that in the political sphere the Spanish woman can be neither a minister, a magistrate nor a soldier; but we are perfectly satisfied without this right, nor does it occur to us even to desire it; for the soldiers, the magistrates and the ministers are

our devoted slaves attached to us by the sweet bonds of domestic life.

If a woman can be neither a deputy nor a Senator in Spain, she can, in exchange, be the Chief of the State—she can be a queen, as she generally is by her merits, by her grace, by her virtues, by her beauty, and by her birthright.

EVA CANEL.